



## WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

### WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Hotels can produce significant quantities of wastewater, both graywater, which mainly comes from washing machines, sinks, showers, baths and roof runoff, and blackwater, which comes from kitchen dishwashing and toilets. In a number of destinations, little or none of this waste is treated, and pollutants such as fecal coliform bacteria and chemicals are discharged directly into the environment. (For more information on proper handling of chemicals, see Chemical Use on page 10.) Poor sewage treatment can lead to pollution of ground and surface water, and degradation of marine resources, such as coral reefs. Among people, inadequate treatment of human waste can cause infection, gastro-intestinal disease, leptospirosis and cholera. In some coastal areas, beaches have been closed to the public because of high levels of chemical and organic pollution.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Proper wastewater treatment can reduce the chances of contamination of local drinking and agricultural water supplies, reducing the need to buy or treat drinking water and improving relations with local communities.
- Effective wastewater treatment can avoid serious illness among guests and staff members and limit the risk of litigation from guests who become infected after drinking or swimming in polluted waters.
- Treating wastewater and sewage may avoid fines and clean-up costs.
- Avoiding the discharge of untreated wastewater or sewage can protect tourism resources by conserving marine habitats and reducing coastal pollution.
- Coastal pollution can decrease business as potential guests cancel trips and seek alternative destinations.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

- Minimize wastewater discharge by reducing water use.
- Collect waste oil and grease for separate processing.
- Use biodegradable detergents and cleaning agents that are compatible with the wastewater treatment technologies.
- Minimize the use of chlorine, bleaches, detergents and other chemicals that end up in wastewater.
- Ensure all wastewater is properly treated before it is released into the environment.
- If a municipal system is available, check that the wastewater collection network is really going to a wastewater treatment plant and is not just discharged directly into the environment.
- If no municipal system is available, work with other businesses and organizations and the local municipality to support the development of modern municipal wastewater treatment systems.
- If no municipal system is available, identify the best options for treatment on site. If feasible, use natural wastewater treatment options that use plants and natural bacteria to purify water, rather than chemicals.
- Reuse treated graywater for washing floors, flushing toilets and irrigating gardens and golf courses.